

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

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Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on Club activities.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

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TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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Welcome New Members

Ottawa Area

Donna Burnside
Carol A. Collins
Susan M. Gibson
Hildegard J. Henderson
Pauline & David Hockey
Saron Lefroy & Family
Fred. W. Simpson
Laura J. Thornhill
Brian Turnbull
Heather C.E. Zurbrigg

Gatineau Area

Patricia Pounienkow

Henry Steger
Chair, Membership Committee
May 2008

Conservation Matters

Christine Hanrahan

There is never a dearth of issues for the Conservation Committee (CC) to consider, and the last few months have been particularly full. Below is a summary of issues, both ongoing and recent. The CC is small, but the members are dedicated to protecting natural areas and most have been on the committee for more than a decade. Individuals on the committee assume responsibility for one or more issues. Everyone contributes to the discussions at monthly meetings and by email, in between. From attending meetings, open houses, reviewing documents, preparing reports and writing letters, there is never a dull moment. We work closely with the Greenspace Alliance and, when appropriate, the OFNC Conservation Committee may join forces with one or another coalition of groups pursuing like-minded goals. The following summary shows the types of issues we get involved with. We'd certainly welcome new members. Please contact Stan Rosenbaum, Chair of the committee (srosen@magma.ca).

Trapa Removal in Voyageur Provincial Park

Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*) is an aquatic invasive weed that quickly dominates shallow waterways and displaces native vegetation by creating dense shade that prohibits growth of other aquatic plants. Because it grows in shallow water and along shorelines, it also disrupts many shore-based recreational activities including swimming. Voyageur Provincial Park has a large infestation of this invasive plant. OMNR Peterborough organized a Trapa removal program for the park over the summer using volunteers—including some OFNC members. Surveying of the Ottawa River shoreline is planned for this year. One volunteer and an MNR employee spent two days in hip waders, searching Voyageur park's creeks and marshes for Trapa. They found and destroyed one small infestation.

South March Highlands Management Plan

Many OFNC members are familiar with the South March Highlands, a section of Canadian Shield in the vicinity of Huntmar Rd. and the Old Carp Rd. A tremendous amount of development has occurred in the last 20 years, fragmenting the area and demolishing large sections of this beautifully unique area. However, the good news is that the City of Ottawa is dedicated to protecting close to 400 hectares of what remains as a conservation area. And that means that quite a large section of this topographically interesting site will be preserved, along with the plants and animals inhabiting it. David Miller, an environmental planner with the City of Ottawa,

attended our June 2008 meeting to provide updates and information about this site, officially called the South March Highlands Conservation Forest. The City is developing a management plan for the area. One meeting has been held with interested parties and stakeholders, and further meetings are planned for the near future. The goal is to come up with a plan that balances protection of the natural environment with passive recreational opportunities. At present, mountain biking, hiking and skiing occur there and will be allowed to continue under proposed management plans, but it is clear that consideration must be given to making sure that these activities do not negatively impact on the natural environment.

Ottawa Greenbelt

The National Capital Commission is conducting a review of the status of the Greenbelt, and the City has issued a White Paper on this topic. For information please see *The Ottawa Greenbelt for Urban Development?* by Stan Rosenbaum following this article.

Larose Forest

Horizon Multiresource Inc. completed their Protection and Development Plan (PDP) for Larose Forest and presented it at an Open House held this May in Limoges. In essence, the plan calls for protection of the natural heritage features of the forest, acknowledges that recreational activities be allowed to continue with some modifications (such as closing one of the ATV trails in a particularly ecologically sensitive area, for part of the summer) and looks at ways to enhance the promotion of the forest as a destination for nature study, recreation, and educational opportunities.

South Nation Conservation, responsible for managing forestry operations in the Larose Forest, presented their draft 20-year management plan at the same open house. Larose Forest is "FSC-certified" which means that the forest must undergo an annual inspection.

Elbow Lake

Gary Bell, Eastern Ontario Program Manager for the Nature Conservancy of Canada, met with the Conservation Committee on May 16, 2008, to provide information about a property they have recently purchased near Westport. The Elbow Lake (former Hewlett-Packard) property comprises about 1,000 acres, and lies within the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. Gary describes the site this way: *"The northern 2/3 of the property are steep granite and marble ridges with deep valleys, while the southern 1/3 is flatter with limestone intermingling with granite. The entire property has rich, southern influenced forests with sugar maple, white pine, red oak, shagbark hickory, etc., but the southern third of the property is really dominated by a rich hickory-oak forest."* It also includes various buildings and other

assorted infrastructure near the lake.

The property held a price tag of \$3 million, of which \$1.1M has been recovered from federal funding, and \$600,000 from the provincial Greenlands program, as well as funding from several other sources, so the present debt amounts to just over \$1M. The OFNC is generously contributing \$100,000 towards the purchase. The money the Club used was from a recent bequest.

More information about Elbow Lake may be found at:

www.natureconservancy.ca/site/News2?abbr=on_ncc_&page=NewsArticle&id=8213

Acknowledgments

The above article was prepared using emails from committee members and Stan's monthly CC summaries.

Reference

Seburn, David. 2008. Conservation Matters. *T&L* 42(3):107-108.

The Ottawa Greenbelt for Urban Development?

*Stan Rosenbaum
Chair, Conservation Committee*

In July the National Capital Commission (NCC) initiated a review of the 1996 Greenbelt Master Plan, for which they are anticipating about two years to allow time for public and other consultations. The review will include consideration of possible urban residential development.

Jumping the gun and not waiting for the NCC review even to begin, the City posted a White Paper on its web site with the heading "Development in the Greenbelt." You can find the White Paper (if it is still there by the time you read this) on the City's web site at http://www.city.ottawa.on.ca/residents/public_consult/beyond_2020/papers/greenbelt_white_paper/index_en.html.

On being asked, the author denied that there was any directive from either City Management or Council to prepare a White Paper on the Greenbelt, and said there

was no intention of asking City Council to take a position on it. Yet, in evident contradiction, on August 5 the City's web site invited public comments on the White Paper and said: "Any and all views expressed in the White Paper are those of the City of Ottawa and not those of the National Capital Commission." The City asked that comments be submitted by September 30 this year.

In view of these events, a number of organized groups, including the OFNC, have formed a Greenbelt Coalition. Some of the partners are: Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital, Sierra Club Ottawa, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and the Outaouais group from north of the Ottawa River usually known by its acronym CREDDO.

Coalition participants have identified many objections to the White Paper. The City should not have issued it prior to commencement of the NCC review. Yet, the timing is suspicious because there was no mention of any proposal for Greenbelt development in the city's proposed Official Plan amendments issued for comments early in 2008.

The amended Official Plan is to be finalized well before the end of 2008 so that it can be formally adopted by City Council early in 2009. Any attempt to introduce measures into it regarding development of Greenbelt land (which of course the city doesn't own since it is federal land) would be improper. One coalition member described the White Paper as "an arrogant misuse of taxpayer's money."

At the time of this writing, the coalition had not yet prepared a response to the White Paper, but the response will certainly point to its inadequacy for such a fundamental issue. It will emphasize the White Paper's failure to properly identify the immense value to the community of preserving the Greenbelt, in that many economic as well as aesthetic and life-style advantages of not developing it are ignored or glossed over.

The coalition will participate in the NCC review, and appreciates that the NCC is allowing substantial time for a thorough investigation of these controversial issues.

We in Conservation Committee are very interested in the views of OFNC members. Do you value the Greenbelt as it is? Can it be better utilized? Does this require development? We hope you will make your views known as the review proceeds. Communicate with me directly (Tel: 613 596-4288, e-mail: srosen@magma.ca) or through the OFNC website (www.ofnc.ca) or with the NCC review process directly, or both!

As events develop, more news and views will be posted on the web site at <http://www.ofnc.ca>.



The 2008 Soirée and the Awards for 2007

Karen McLachlan Hamilton and Irwin Brodo

Each year, usually around the end of April, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists Club celebrates the end of one season and the beginning of another. I always wondered why April . . . but then again why not. It is just before birding season, many of the plants are waiting to sprout, and usually it is too chilly for most cold-blooded animals and invertebrates to be out. So maybe it is the best time for people who enjoy natural history to get together.

The 2008 soirée began as a nice social event. I spent time chatting with some of the long standing members, some Macoun members and met some of the newer faces in the Club. You never know who you might meet—I had a very pleasant chat with a new member who, at one time, lived just two doors from my house and knew many of my neighbours. It truly is a small world. I also had the chance to see the fine selection of photographs and paintings, as well as Club posters and



Macoun presentations. I can not forget to mention the silent auction and book sale going on at the same time. There was so much going on it was hard to fit everything in.





The formal portion of the evening began with Susan Laurie Bourque who, as "official evaluator," presented gifts to all Macoun Field Club members participating in the natural history exhibits. As each person or group came up, Susan gave us a synopsis of what each project entailed. This year there were five projects and eight presenters.

Francis, Julien and Patrick Caron's exhibit, entitled "A Summary of our Field Trips," involved GPS and Google Maps to follow their wanderings at the Macoun study site and Pakenham. First they would use their GPS unit on their field trips. Then they would use these coordinates and Google Maps to record where they went and what they saw at specific points. The final result was a

computer slide show of that day's excursion.



Francis, Julien and Patrick Caron with Susan Laurie-Bourque

Gabriel Levac looked farther afield to study the Tasmanian Tiger. This very unique marsupial once lived in Australia and New Guinea thousands of years ago, but only managed to survive on Tasmania—that is until the Europeans arrived. It is believed that this animal is now extinct, primarily due to over-hunting and the bounty placed on them.



Nathan and Jorden Jason-Byerlea with Susan



Ian Jason-Byerlea

Nathan and Jorden Jason-Byerlea chose a very fitting subject this year. I did not know that the United Nations declared 2008 as the International Year of the Potato! Nathan and Jorden discussed the origin of this vegetable and described how it was transported throughout the world. There was also something about the mysterious “unknown potato.” Within a few minutes, it became evident that these two really know and love their potatoes.

Passion seems to run in the family, because Ian Jason-Byerlea’s love for fishing was clearly evident in his presentation on the fish of Mooneys Bay

and the Rideau River. Ian's knowledge of the fish species and ecology was vast. He and Susan discussed mercury levels in the local fish and how to make fish ties. I think Ian gets the sound bite of the evening with his "Black Crappie doesn't taste crappy."

The fifth presentation was "Carnivorous plants and Killer Fungi" by Robbie Stewart. Robbie elaborately described several strategies plants and fungi use to capture food. I knew about the infamous Venus Flytrap as well as the pitcherplants



Robbie Stewart and Susan.



Jack Stewart

and sundews, but the mechanisms behind the bladderwort was new to me. As for the fungi, the ones that capture the nematodes by a lasso-like device is certainly the most inventive.

The next item of the evening was the Macoun Field Club reports, presented by Jack and Robbie Stewart, presidents of the Juniors and Intermediates respectively. Both talked about the fun they had on field trips; Stony Swamp and Pakenham continue to be favourite places for the club. Jack enjoyed the talks on shark conservation and bats, while Robbie

mentioned the talk on arctic fauna, climate change and the Fisher skinning by Gerry Lee.

The highlight of any OFNC Soirée is always the presentation of the Club's annual awards. President Ken Allison joined Awards Committee Chair, Irwin Brodo, in making the presentations.

The Member of the Year

award was given to **Carla Hilado**, one of the volunteers working with the Back Yard Garden at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. In 2007, she took on many new activities that are necessary for the garden, such as working on the Butterfly Meadow as part of Wednesday night group. In addition, she organized the brochures and got the seed project going.



Carla Hilado receiving her award from Ken Allison.

The George McGee Service Award went to **Louis L'Arrivée**, who has done a splendid job as coordinator of mailing for *Trail & Landscape* four times a year for about eight years.



Erwin Dressen with Ken Allsion



Cliff Bennett and Ken Allsion

The Conservation Award for Members was awarded to **Erwin Dreessen**, who has been a member of the Greenspace Alliance since it was formed. He worked on many issues including the Leitrim Wetlands and southern corridor/McCarthy Woods.

Cliff Bennett received the Conservation Award for Non-Members. Cliff is one of the founders of the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists based in Carleton Place and has written a weekly column in the Lanark newspaper on birds and natural history. He also guides canoe outings and has been an effective Coordinator for the Eastern Region of Ontario Nature "Federation."

The Ann Hanes Natural History Award was given to **Ross Layberry**. Although an amateur entomologist, Ross is one of authors of *Butterflies of Canada*. He recently re-evaluated species dropped from the original list of Ottawa butterflies (1981), and wrote up the *Butterflies of Ottawa Region* in *T&L*.

The relatively new Mary Stuart Education Award went to **Martha Webber**, who has been a dedicated and effective teacher of natural history to both children and adults for over 30 years. She is an expert on edible plants.

This year the photography prizes were given to David Sangester for his chickadee, Suzanne Deschênes for her milkweed and butterfly photograph. First prize went to Christine Hanrahan for her winter fox image. Ruth Allison received first prize for her artwork.



Martha Webber

The soirée concluded with the silent auction wrap-up, live auction and closing remarks from Fenja Brodo. I would consider the event as another successful end to another successful year.

Colin Freebury and David Hobden kindly provided the images for this article.

Everywhere a Sign

Linda Jeays

Needed A discreet vandal.

Qualifications Facility with simple tools, good night vision, demonstrated concern for the environment. Must have truck.

No previous criminal record.

Character Elderly person preferred with beatific expression, beard and/or white hair. Physically fit. Smooth talker desirable.

Uniform Tilley hat, hiking boots, binoculars, field guide of choice.

Job description To roam the countryside removing signs superfluous, duplicate, unenforceable, unsightly, commercial.

Disposal of aforementioned signage is to be in accordance with local bylaws and parts to be recycled where possible.

Remuneration Entire satisfaction in making the world a better place.

Warning Work may involve confrontation with authorities municipal, provincial and federal including but not limited to police and conservation officers.

Should the above advertisement be illegal parties are advised that the writer is using a pseudonym and that this is only a poem.

News from the FWG: 2008

Christine Hanrahan

It has been one year since the last FWG update was written, in August, 2007. Much has happened in the duration, but because of space constraints, only highlights are given.

Backyard Garden News

The BYG continues to evolve and change as new ideas on how the garden should be shaped and planted arise. Isabelle Nicol continues as the BYG Coordinator, while Claudia Burns, a former BYG Manager, has returned (though not as Manager) bringing her expert gardening skills and knowledge to the site. The nursery area has been reorganized (thanks to Nicole Gourret), complete with a flagstone path into the area. The Woodland Walk area is a favourite with visitors, and while it looks as if it has evolved naturally, it is really the result of much hard work. A new sign now points the way to this area.



Baby Painted Turtle in BYG pond.

Notebooks have been provided for each BYG bed in which plans and plants are recorded by the volunteer(s) responsible. Plant lists for each bed continue to be developed, under the guidance of Claudia. Betty Campbell has mapped the BYG beds and marked the trees and shrubs. Chris Lauzon, our summer employee, has been recording wildlife usage of plants in the BYG.

Quite a few new volunteers came on board in 2008, but because not everyone can help out every week, we're always looking for more. A multitude of tasks are undertaken to keep the garden in such excellent condition. If you enjoy gardening and nature, why not consider donating a few hours per week to the BYG? Volunteers meet Friday mornings from spring through early fall. Contact the FWG at either 613-234-6767 or fletcher@ofnc.ca.

Signs

As noted, one of the new signs this year is for the Woodland Walk section of the BYG. Other new signs include those requesting people to stay out of the Ravine, and directional ("you are here") signs located at three points around the garden. We've also erected signs giving a brief explanation of each habitat. In the works are signs asking visitors to stay on paths and respect the site. Once the exact wording has been decided, these signs will be made and erected. As always, Charlie Clifford is our "Sign Man" overseeing each new sign from inception to final installation.

Events, Tours, Walks

Native Plant Sale

The plant sale, held annually on the first Saturday in June, is usually well attended, with many repeat customers, although in 2008 numbers and sales were down. As this is our major fund-raiser for the year, we need to publicize it to a wider audience. Consequently, a small ad-hoc committee has been formed to look at publicity. Another committee will coordinate the plant sale, relieving the burden placed on the one or two volunteers who have organized it in the past, particularly Sandra Garland.

Bird Events

The Great Backyard Bird Count, held across North America in mid-February, aims to get people out counting birds in their backyards. The definition of "Backyard" is fairly flexible, and for us it means that the entire 5-hectare site as well as the Arboretum. David Hobden always organizes the FWG participation and compiles the results, which for 2008 were 15 species.

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) is held annually on the second Saturday in May. This event at FWG is now attracting a good number of participants. I'm very grateful to Peter Fuller for once again leading the birding walk around the garden during which 32 species were found. Prior to the walk, a short talk and a birding quiz got everyone in the mood. Prizes were bags of organic, bird-friendly coffee, donated by the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Because FWG has been holding an IMBD event for more than 10 years, we were recognized by Environment for the Americas, organizers of IMBD, as part of the **International Migratory Bird Day**

Ten Year Club. This brought a certificate, a card, and a posting on their website.

Participation in Other Events

The FWG once again participated in the Wildlife Awareness Event at Billings Bridge Mall, as part of National Wildlife Week, organized by the Ottawa Wildlife Festival (<http://www.ncrwildlife festival.org/>). Many thanks to all the FWG volunteers who staffed the booth during the three days.

FWG also participated in an Earth Day event held at the Department of National Defence headquarters. Our display was set up and volunteers staffed the exhibit. By all accounts, interest in the garden was high. Thanks to David Hobden, Diane Lepage and Bonnie Mabey for helping with this.

Many friends and family members assembled at the FWG on April 26 to remember Eileen Evans and participate in the dedication of the pergola, generously funded in part by Eileen's family. People shared fond memories of Eileen, remembering her as an avid hiker, a keen naturalist, a dedicated OFNC member and, of course, as a dog walker with her beloved Bentley by her side.

Walks

During Environment Week (first week in June), two walks were held at FWG for employees of AAFC and Health Canada. The Navan Women's Institute requested a tour of the garden and this was held in mid-June. Two OFNC walks, a general nature walk, and a butterfly outing, were also held. Two groups of Pathfinders came to the garden, one had a guided tour, while the second group helped plant wildflowers. Several people from the Elgin Street Public School were given a tour of the BYG and provided with advice for creating a schoolyard garden. In May, Renate Sander Regier, a BYG volunteer, gave a tour to a group of students from St. Paul's University, as part of their "Religious Education and Ecology: Right Relations" class.

Volunteers

For the second year running, Price Waterhouse Cooper sent a party of volunteers, their "Green Team," to spend an entire day helping out at FWG. Thanks to their participation we got a tremendous amount of work done. They erected new posts for bird houses, cut buckthorn, and laid gravel on the Bill Holland Trail. The latter is particularly useful as the trail becomes muddy and slippery in wet weather. Several volunteers were repeats from the 2007 participation. We truly appreciate their work and enjoyed their enthusiasm. Price Waterhouse made a generous financial donation as well.



Newly gravelled path by pond.

Information Sheets, Brochures, Newsletter

Many of our information sheets and brochures, both online and hard copy, have been revised and updated. We've also added a new webpage for "*Trees and Shrubs of the FWG*," companion to "*Wildflowers of the FWG*."

Our inventories continue to be updated as new species are added. All inventories, information sheets and brochures can be accessed via our website at www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php. Click on "The Wildlife" and then explore the various topics such as "Butterflies of the FWG", "Fungi of the FWG" etc.

We have an electronic newsletter that comes out approximately four times a year. To be added to the mailing list, please email fletcher@ofnc.ca.

Grants

FWG was the recipient of two City of Ottawa grants in 2008. One was to purchase water monitoring equipment so we can more accurately measure what is happening in our large Amphibian Pond. Chris, our summer employee, has conducted most of the monitoring and his final report will be available at the end of summer.

The second grant funded the removal of large buckthorn trees from the Ravine. Tony Denton and Elizabeth Gammell spearheaded this, with Elizabeth being the primary liaison between FWG and the City. This grant stipulated that all underground services (water, gas, etc.) must be located and marked before work could begin. Elizabeth oversaw this component, while Tony marked the area of the Ravine in which work was to be done, and tagged the trees slated for removal. With the help of Iola Price, Tony and Elizabeth scheduled the work, which took place the second week of August. Although the ravine now looks bare in places, most of the big buckthorns are gone and other species such as nearby stands of flowering raspberry and sumac will fill in the gaps, helped by planting of native trees and shrubs.

Habitats

Old Field. One half of the Old Field was mowed in October 2007. Although this area also looked very bare at first, once spring came, it wasn't long before raspberry canes and goldenrod were flourishing again. Evening Primrose was abundant for the first time in the Old Field, and new plant species appeared, including Joe-pye Weed. Dog-strangling Vine (DSV) did not dominate the site as had been feared, and in fact there was a noticeable reduction of the species in the mowed area. This was no doubt largely due to the increasing spread of goldenrod and raspberry.

Butterfly Meadow. Work continues on the new addition to the Butterfly Meadow. Diane Lepage is spearheading this, with a group of dedicated volunteers who turn up every Wednesday evening no matter the weather. Although only half-completed, it already looks quite lush and will be quite something when finished. In the spring, the site was rototilled to get rid of DSV. Volunteers then spent a long time picking out the DSV roots and preparing the soil for planting. This appears to have paid off because, at the time of writing, there is little to no DSV in that particular area.

Summer Employee

Once again we received a Services Canada Student Grant enabling us to hire a student for the summer. Chris Lauzon started work in early June with a focus on monitoring the pond. He also devised several experiments with DSV which were ongoing over the summer. We don't have the results yet, but the next update will report what came out of these studies. Chris' other main focus was documenting and photographing the fauna, primarily insects, found in the BYG. He noted whether they were pollinators, which species was feeding on what etc. At the end of August he gave a PowerPoint presentation on his findings, using many of his excellent photos.

Plants and Animals

Birds

Four new species were added to the FWG bird list in the last year, starting with a Rough-legged Hawk found by Marilyn Ward in November 2007. Four Long-eared Owls were discovered by Marc Latremouille in April 2008, and this past spring I added two more warbler species, Blackpoll and Mourning Warbler. The Long-eared Owls were certainly one of the highlights of the year!

Other interesting avian visitors included an "Oregon" Junco, found by Bev McBride in late 2007. This western form of the Dark-eyed Junco, was once considered a separate species. It certainly generated a lot of interest from both birders and photographers. An American Bittern stayed in the pond for a few days in early June. It was there with four Green Herons, so pity the poor frog population! However, the bittern moved on, and the Green Herons dispersed after a week or so. In fact, apart from a short period in May and again in mid-June, the herons were largely absent from the pond. For at least a week, two pairs of Green Herons could be seen in separate areas of the garden, behaving as if they were on territory. I don't know if both pairs nested in the garden, but one pair certainly did, in an Amur Maple tree. The nest that I found had three downy young in early July (the only time I actually checked it). Nearby was another stick nest which may or may not have been used (Green Herons will sometimes nest close to each other, though more often are solitary). However, at the same time the downy young were found in the nest, a well-fledged juvenile Green Heron was found at the pond and observed over the course of a week. As far as I know, the herons have been largely absent from FWG since then. They must have found better feeding grounds. Last year, five juveniles and two adults put on quite a show in the pond for several weeks before dispersing.

For the second year in a row, American Kestrels did not nest at FWG. Indeed, they were largely absent from the garden, even in early spring which is generally when they are most active and visible at FWG.

The other star attraction at FWG turned out to be the very common Mallard! During the winter, part of the pond remained open and Mallards (and a few Black Ducks) congregated there. It began in November with perhaps 15 to 20 ducks, and by January the open area of the pond was, quite literally, full of ducks—I stopped counting after 150! The pond became known as the Duck Pond to visitors who took to bringing bags of bread and cracked corn to feed them. The ducks were happy, and the visitors, including a lot of photographers, were also happy.

A female Mallard brought her three downy young to the pond in mid-July and for one day, the little guys were whirling around like wind-up toys and having a grand time. Sadly, they were gone by the next day, no doubt food for one predator or

Call for Nominations for OFNC Awards

The Awards Committee

It is time to think back and consider those OFNC members (and, in one case, even non-members) who, by virtue of their special efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition.

The Club has six awards: Honorary Membership, Member of the Year Award, George McGee Service Award, Conservation Award for OFNC Members, Conservation Award for Non-Members, and the Anne Hanes Natural History Award. A seventh award, the Education Award, was presented for the first time a few years ago. At a time when dedicated and effective natural history educators, both professional and amateur, are both under-appreciated and under-funded, the OFNC wants to draw attention to the importance of natural history education in schools and in our community at large. The award is described in its own section below.

An elaboration of each of these categories is presented in this centre-fold, together with space to put the nominee's name and accomplishments. (Additional sheets can be used if needed.) If necessary, the Awards Committee will seek out more information on individuals nominated, but of course, the more information you provide, the easier it is for the committee to make a decision. An informative article on the background of these awards, and a list of recent recipients, was published in Volume 33, Number 4, of *Trail & Landscape*. Last year's awardees are highlighted in this issue of *T&L*. The deadline for the submission of nominations is December 31, 2008. Nominate as many individuals as you like, but be sure to give your reasons. Return the nomination form to the Chair of the Awards Committee:

Dr. Irwin Brodo
28 Benson Street
Ottawa, ON K2E 5J5

If you have any questions regarding the nominations, feel free to contact Irwin Brodo, Chair of the Awards Committee, at 613-723-2054, or at ibrodo@sympatico.ca.

NOMINATION FORM FOR AWARDS

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

In the appropriate spaces, please submit the names of those you wish to nominate for OFNC awards and your reasons for each nomination. The more information you provide, the more effective will be the assessment of nominees. Attach additional information if the space is inadequate. Nominations may be made for more than one person. The Awards Committee may contact you for further information regarding any of your nominations.

Name of Nominator: _____ Email _____

Address: _____ Telephone _____

HONORARY MEMBER: This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions by a member, or non-member, to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club. [Usually people awarded an honorary membership have made extensive contributions over many years. At present honorary membership is limited to 25 people.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

MEMBER OF THE YEAR: In recognition of the member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

GEORGE MCGEE SERVICE AWARD: In recognition of a member or members who has (have) contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years. [Members of the Executive are excluded from consideration.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

ANNE HANES NATURAL HISTORY AWARD: In recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley. [The award is designed to recognize work that is done by amateur naturalists.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

EDUCATION AWARD: For members, non-members or organizations, in recognition for outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Region. Potential recipients would include museum personnel (both professional and volunteer), biology teachers, talented and dedicated field trip leaders, authors popularizing local natural history, and other educators of children or adults.

Nominee: _____

Reasons for nomination: _____

CONSERVATION AWARD - MEMBER: In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a member (or group of members) in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District [The area within 50 km of the Peace Tower in Ottawa.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

CONSERVATION AWARD - NON - MEMBER: In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a non-member (or group of non-members) in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District. [The area within 50 km of the Peace Tower.]

Nominee _____

Reasons for the nomination _____

another. The female stayed on alone for a few more days before eventually leaving.



American Snout butterfly.

Other Fauna

In 2007, I wrote "it has been a fantastic year for Monarch butterflies." The story was quite different in 2008, when any Monarch sighting was cause for comment. Only one or two were seen at FWG and definitely not every day. The story was much the same in other parts of the region. On the other hand, European Skippers were present in good numbers, and up to 50 could be seen with little trouble during a

visit. One or two Silver-spotted Skippers were seen quite regularly, and both Striped and Banded Hairstreak were present for a few weeks. Eastern Tailed Blues were only sporadic this year, and in contrast to last year, Red Admirals were virtually absent. Nor did I find any Delaware Skippers this year (or hear of anyone else finding them) at FWG. However, the big excitement, for me anyway, was the sighting of two American Snout butterflies on 1 August, representing only the second record for the Ottawa Region. I saw what looked like a couple of brown moths flying by and was sufficiently curious to try and get a better look. When I did, I was flabbergasted to see that unmistakable "snout." Both butterflies spent at least 45 minutes in a Glossy Buckthorn shrub.

Other interesting insects also turned up during 2008 at the garden, and it proved to be a great year for adding new species to the FWG insect list (http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher/alphabet/insects/index_e.php). Amongst the most interesting were Brown Mantidfly, Dogwood Calligrapher Beetle, Forked Fungus Beetle, and best of all, Phantom Crane fly found and photographed by Chris Lauzon. It is not easy to get photos of these beautiful and elusive insects, and Chris' photos are very good indeed. It was also a fantastic year for Odonates at the garden and I managed to add eight new species to our list: Ebony Jewelwing, Powdered Dancer,

Emerald Spreadwing, Amber-winged Spreadwing, Prince Baskettail, Black-shouldered Spinyleg, Common Pondhawk, and Band-winged Meadowhawk. Common Green Darners, Lance-tipped Darners, Canada Darners, Autumn Meadowhawks, White-faced Meadowhawks and Eastern Forktails were very common. I'm grateful to Chris Lewis and Bob Bracken, authors of the recently revised Checklist of Ottawa Odonates, for help with and confirmation of odonate identifications.



Phantom Cranefly. Photo by Chris Lauzon.

A pair of Muskrats was found in the pond on 20 May, engaged in courtship. Whether they successfully bred, I don't know. It did occur to me that the pond was getting rather crowded what with Muskrats, toads, frogs, herons, ducks, Red-winged Blackbirds and turtles. A very large Painted Turtle was seen early on in the season, staking claim to a raised patch of vegetation in the pond. Sometime later, I saw a Snapping Turtle floating under the surface of the water in the deeper end of the pond, and then in August, a smaller Painted Turtle appeared near the bridge for a few days. Over in the BYG, a tiny painted turtle turned up one day in the little pond and remained until mid-August when one of the volunteers found it dead. That was a blow, because we'd all become very attached to this little creature and had watched it get bigger, bask on the rocks, swim across the water, and watch the world. I think

we all worried about its survival, but when it actually died it was a sad day.

Invasive Species

Invasive species continued to occupy us. As noted above, a lot of work was done in removing Glossy and Common Buckthorn this summer. DSV was also removed from a number of locations using a scythe or by pulling and cutting. However, in many areas where DSV had been dominant in the past, I found that numerous other species were growing amongst or over DSV. As Goldenrod spreads, the DSV is displaced. Also doing a good job of this are Purple Flowering Raspberry and Red Raspberry. Even Cow Vetch seemed to be dominating DSV this past summer, climbing all over it and in many areas weighing it down, rather than the reverse happening.

We've been discussing Amur Maples and Tartarian Honeysuckle for removal, as both are fast-spreading and invasive. A few years ago, one of our volunteers tackled a swath of Amur Maple saplings, clearing a large area. That site is now full of Amur Maples again. Along with those species, we are looking at Canada Thistle because it is spreading dramatically in the garden.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to volunteer at the FWG, why not drop by any Friday morning spring through fall, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and see what it is all about. You can talk to the volunteers, explore the garden and get a feel for what we do. You can also discuss other volunteer opportunities at the garden while you are there. There is invasive species control, tree planting, or any number of other activities. Regular volunteer groups meet on Friday morning (BYG) and Wednesday evening (Butterfly Meadow), spring through fall.

The FWG is run by a management committee and

FWG Details and Contact Information

The FWG is located off Prince of Wales Drive on the Central Experimental Farm. For more information please visit the website at: www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php. Brochures about the garden are available from the Centre on Friday mornings from spring through fall, Sunday afternoons in the summer, or during the week June through August when we have a summer employee.

●FWG phone number: 613-234-6767.

●Henry Steger, Chair, FWG Management Committee: hsteger@eisa.com.

●Sandy Garland: website and information about the FWG Newsletter: fletcher@ofnc.ca.

●Christine Hanrahan: bird and wildlife observations: vanessa@magma.ca.

AAFC Security: 613-759-1985 .

we'd be very happy to see new members. You are welcome to drop by one of our regular meetings (always the fourth Wednesday of each month, at 7:30 p.m. at FWG) and see what the committee does.

Acknowledgments: As always, thanks to all the volunteers who make FWG happen!

Photos: Christine Hanrahan, except where noted.

References:

Bracken, Bob and Chris Lewis. 2008. A Checklist of the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Ottawa-Gatineau (2008 Update). *T&L* 42(3):115-131.

Exotic Visitor

Robert Nero

Nuthatches, chickadees, hairy and downy woodpeckers forage almost daily on a suet-log that dangles just a few yards from our living room windows suspended by a wire from a branch of an oak tree, so when a female Pileated Woodpecker unexpectedly appeared in our yard . . . incredibly big, black, white and red . . . we both eagerly watched it, hoping it would find the suet-log, and then it did! It swooped up onto the log, flourishing its wings, a kind of flamenco dancer and there the bird hung in bright sunlight great scarlet crest blazing as it tilted its head to extract nuggets of suet before dropping off and flashing away.

Bird Highlights from the 50K and Environs January – June 2008

Chris Lewis

The first half of 2008 was a period of contrasts, with weather and water playing major roles in what we and the birds did and saw. Mild temperatures during most of January decimated the nearly 40 cm of snow we received in mid-December (on the day of one of the most challenging and even dangerous Christmas Bird Counts in Ottawa-Gatineau history). But this early respite was short-lived. We were repeatedly slammed with more snow in February and March, narrowly falling short of the 1971 record of 444 cm, and wondered if it would be June by the time it all melted. Then, nearly two weeks of summer-like weather in April settled that question, and the birds for the most part were where they wanted to be by the breeding season.

Waterfowl

Too much snow and almost no water, followed by a rapid melt resulting in too much water, made spring waterfowl watching a bit of a gamble. When to visit the traditional staging areas, and where would the birds be? The first signs of **Snow Goose** movement through eastern Ontario began in the Cornwall and Long Sault areas along the St. Lawrence River in late March and early April. In mid-April we hit the jackpot when well over 50,000 predominantly Greater Snow Geese had moved west and congregated in fields near Riceville. By 27 April, approximately 14,000 were still farther west in the now considerably less flooded Cobb Lake Creek floodplain and on 07 May over 2,000—an unusual number for this late date—were still around in a quarry pond near Navan. Another “jackpot” was hit on 20 April, when **Greater White-fronted, Snow, Ross’s, Cackling** and **Canada Geese** were all seen within the span of a couple of hours, making for a “five goose day in the 50K.” **Brant** were strangely absent this spring. Despite reports of large numbers near Kingston in the last weeks of May, only single birds were reported in Ottawa—one at Shirleys Bay on 16 May, another (perhaps the same bird) at Andrew Haydon Park on the 20th and at Rcmic Rapids on the 29th.

Mute Swans (the wild ones as opposed to the captive “royal swans” on the Rideau) are still rare in our area. An immature bird discovered at the Alfred lagoons on 26

May was still present until at least 24 June, and two adults were noted on the Mississippi River in Carleton Place on 26 and 27 May. Evidently a single swan was seen at a nest on Mississippi Lake during the 2001-2005 Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, the only one recorded in this area during this period (*fide Michael Jaques*). The only local report of a **Tundra Swan** was on 15 April at the large quarry pond along Moodie Dr. south of the Trail Rd. landfill.

Other noteworthy waterfowl species included a totally unexpected male **Eurasian Wigeon** in breeding plumage at the Moodie Dr. pond. First reported on 25 June, the bird was still present on 01 July; this was a new record for Ottawa, for both of these months. One of the wintering female **Harlequin Ducks** on the Ottawa River was still at the base of the Champlain bridge until at least 07 March, and a male **Barrow's Goldeneye** lingered until at least 02 April on the Rideau River between Strathcona Park and the Hurdman bridge. A small number of **White-winged Scoters** dropped in briefly at Shirleys Bay on 16 May, and a single male **Surf Scoter** (rare in Ottawa in spring) showed up at the Moodie Dr. pond on the 21st. The proliferation of **Redhead** and **Ruddy Ducks** continued again this year and aside from the fact that both are beautiful species, they are almost not "highlights" anymore.

Gallinaceous Birds, Loons, Grebes, Cormorants and Herons

The smallest and largest of the gallinaceous species in our region, **Gray Partridge** and **Wild Turkey**, were seen in a wide variety of places and seem to be holding their own. Coveys of partridge were spotted near Kanata, Richmond, Alfred and Breckenridge, just to name a few locations. Turkeys were again widespread and always entertaining, however one of most peculiar scenarios involved not turkeys but a **Ruffed Grouse** in the Shirleys Bay area. "Hilda" as the bird was named by some photographers who became enamoured with her, was an obviously strongly imprinted creature, literally running up to people and vehicles and begging for handouts. She was last reported in late January and her ultimate fate remains as yet unknown.

A couple of **Red-throated Loons** were seen this season—one at the Moodie Dr. pond on 29 April and another below the Deschênes Rapids on 10 May. Small numbers of **Horned** and **Red-necked Grebes** dropped in at Shirleys Bay at the end of April and a breeding-plumaged Horned Grebe first reported at the Embrun lagoons on 24 May evidently decided to spend the summer here—an almost unheard of occurrence in our region. **Double-crested Cormorants** nested again on the Ottawa River; the small colony has so far remained limited to only a handful of pairs and has not yet expanded beyond the tiny islet north of the Lemieux Island filtration plant where they first nested three years ago. Those in search of **Least Bitterns** had

a good year—several were reported from marshes on both the Ontario and Québec sides in late June. A pair of **Black-crowned Night-Herons** nested for the second year among the Ring-billed Gull colony at Deschênes, and two reports of **Great Egrets** came from east of Bourget on 18 April and the Carp River on 04 May.

Raptors

Several pairs of **Ospreys** did well again this year, and a pair of adult **Bald Eagles** was seen frequenting the fields and trees near the heronry at Shirleys Bay—the same location where a pair was seen last year. An immature Bald Eagle was seen in both an unconventional time of year and location, from 11 June into the first week of July, at the Moodie Dr. pond. A wintering **Red-shouldered Hawk** discovered along Old Carp Rd. near Huntmar Rd. lingered until at least 24 February, and another appeared on 19 February in the same location in Aylmer, Québec where a bird spent the entire month of February in 2007. **Rough-legged Hawks** were virtually absent this winter probably due to a poor season for voles. They began to move through in early April when good numbers were seen in the Breckenridge area as well as fields east of Ottawa. Sightings of single **Golden Eagles** again came from Gatineau Park at Ramsay Lake and the Eardley escarpment from mid-January to mid-March and again in mid-April.

Reports of two different **Gyrfalcons**, a dark morph and a grey morph, in February and March, stirred some excitement. The dark bird was seen along the Ottawa River, the Rideau Canal, and the Trail Rd. landfill until 12 March. The grey morph was also seen on the Ottawa River and was last reported on 24 March below the Deschênes Rapids. Our resident pair of **Peregrine Falcons** got off to a bit of a rough start this year. After laying two eggs in the first week of April on the ledge of the Crowne Plaza hotel (their preferred nest site for the past 11 years), it was a shock when absolutely no evidence of eggs was discovered a week later. The mystery of this sudden disappearance was never solved, but fortunately the pair re-nested and the two young hatched in mid-May were doing very well by the end of the period covered in this summary.

Rallids and Shorebirds

High water levels in the Richmond fen south of Munster may have affected the **Yellow Rail** colony this year; none were detected during a couple of visits in May. Less sensitive rallids such as **Virginia Rail**, **Sora** and **Common Moorhen** were easily found in their typical breeding habitats. The largest of our local rallid species, **Sandhill Cranes**, came back to their traditional area; two pairs were first observed on 10 March, feeding and displaying in the nearby farm fields along Milton Rd. and were subsequently seen in the following weeks until they retreated to their less accessible breeding grounds in the Mer Bleue bog. An unusual date and location for a pair of cranes was 25 June in a farm field north of Burritts Rapids where they

remained until at least the 29th.

Inevitably the first shorebirds to arrive are **Killdeer** and this year a couple of early fellows on 27 March must have been a bit confused by the mountains of snow in the Britannia Conservation Area and the fields along Hwy 148 near Plaisance, Québec. All of the expected migrants and local breeders caught up as the weather improved. Highlights included a rare in spring **American Golden Plover** at the Alfred lagoons on 26 May, 14 **Ruddy Turnstones** at the St. Albert lagoons on 28 May, and a male **Ruff** in "full ruff" at the Marais des Laiches west of Masson, Québec from 11-12 May. **Upland Sandpipers** apparently had a good year with many reported on territory in several locations from 18 May through the end of June. **Wilson's Phalaropes** were again noted in established breeding sites such as the Embrun lagoons.

Larids

Although no great rarities were found, **Iceland**, **Lesser Black-backed** and **Glaucous Gulls** were all well-represented. An odd sight on 20 April was a late **Iceland Gull** perched on a fence with two early **Bonaparte's Gulls** near Twin Elm. Single **Thayer's Gulls** were seen in the vicinity of the Trail Rd. landfill on 24 January and 02 March, as well as on the Rideau River near the Hurdman bridge on 05 January. The numbers of **Bonaparte's Gulls** feeding on freshly-emerged mayflies (Ephemeroptera) over the Deschênes Rapids peaked on 01 June; by the end of the week they had all moved on. A very late immature **Glaucous Gull** was seen at the Dick Bell Park marina on 04 June. **Caspian Terns**, the largest species in the world, are rare but almost annual visitors to our area in spring and summer. The first of the season was seen cruising along the Rideau Canal near Dow's Lake on 05 May. From 31 May through the end of June and into July, a lingering **Caspian** was frequently seen at the Moodie Dr. pond, on one occasion in the company of seven **Common Terns**. The annual flight of **Arctic Terns** up the Ottawa River began on 20 May, and from 29 May-02 June one or two these amazing marathon migrants was noted almost daily at the Deschênes Rapids. The **Black Tern** colony in the marshes along the Québec side of the river was going strong by mid-June and small numbers were reported elsewhere around our region in spring and early summer.

Owls and Other Non-passerines

There is a mystique about owls that has always fascinated us, but in recent years some kinds of attention have been taken to extremes, in no small part thanks to the ease of access to information on the internet and the boom in popularity of the digital camera. Crowding, trespassing, baiting with live animals to get them to "perform" for us—such behaviours around owls and other species already under stress during winter, migration and breeding seasons has begun to raise some serious concerns.

The treatment of a trio of **Snowy Owls** east of Casselman was a notorious example this year. While reports from all over Ontario indicated that very few Snowys wintered in southern parts of the province (like Rough-legged Hawks, probably due to a lack of voles), the birds in the Ste-Rose area were artificially maintained by handouts from people throwing pet shop mice at them. Furthermore, some observers reported that when the birds wouldn't fly anymore after being fed, certain individuals would walk out into the fields to flush them to get them to "do something." Is this the way we want to show respect for wildlife? Respect issues involve not just behaviour around birds, but around other people as well. In the spring of 2008 the OFNC Birds Committee and members of the RA Photo Club Nature Group collaborated to produce a Code of Conduct for birdwatchers and photographers. The Code appears on the birding page of the OFNC web site. Paparazzi-style antics aside, some interesting reports of owls included a **Snowy Owl** in a bizarre location—the top of a White Pine along a ski trail in Gatineau Park from 23 January until at least the 27th. A **Barred Owl** was regularly seen on March Valley Rd. until at least 25 March. Species on the move included a **Short-eared Owl** along Milton Rd. on 06 April, a **Great Gray Owl** near Manotick the same day, a couple of **Long-eared Owls** at the Central Experimental Farm on 14 April, and single **Northern Saw-whet Owls** along the Jack Pine Trail on 11 January and in the Clyde Ave. woods on 09 April.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos have previously nested in the 50K but are rarely seen; a pair found this year on the eastern side of the park along Meech Creek on 29 June was a nice discovery. Species that returned to established sites included **Chimney Swifts** at the Dominican Fathers College on Empress Ave. in downtown Ottawa, and **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in the Pakenham and Constance Bay areas. Three female **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** visited feeders in diverse locations (Williamstown and Hammond in Ontario and Alcove in Québec) from January through late April. A male and a female **American Three-toed Woodpecker** showed up on two different dates (13 January and 24 February) in the exact same location (Ramsay Lake in Gatineau Park). A male **Black-backed Woodpecker** was seen near the OFNC feeder along the Jack Pine Trail on 11 and 13 January, and another was found on the Québec side along Baillic Rd. east of Breckenridge on 03 February.

Passerines

Generally above average temperatures in the early part of the year probably helped several birds remain long after fall migration. Even more assistance was provided by bird feeders—a factor that has been largely responsible for the northern expansion of some species, the most obvious examples being **Mourning Dove** and **Northern Cardinal**. **Northern Shrikes** also take advantage of bird feeders (the customers, not the seeds) and were ubiquitous until early April. A **Tufted Titmouse** in the

Forest Park community near Embrun stayed until at least 05 April, and a **Townsend's Solitaire** was still feeding on juniper and other berries in the Parkwood Hills/Fisher Heights area until at least the 3rd of that month. Another Tufted Titmouse briefly visited a feeder in Constance Bay on 23 February. A **Carolina Wren** found in the Qualicum/Graham Park area in early December was sporadically spotted into mid-January, and another was very vocal in the Britannia Conservation Area on 05 April and then again from the 19-23 April. While **Hermit Thrushes** have often tried to winter in the 50K, it's not often known if they survive. This year, two individuals managed to do quite nicely, one in Hurdman Park in Ottawa at (of course) a bird feeder, and the other in Deschênes, Québec. A **Gray Catbird** in Constance Bay continued to frequent (what else) a feeder until at least 12 January, and another was found on 27 January in the Britannia Conservation Area. A **Northern Mockingbird**, likely the same individual that has been seen on and off since 2006 in the Crestview/Tanglewood area appeared in the same location until 14 January, and another was seen from 07-10 January near Island Park Dr. and Scott St. Several large flocks of **Bohemian Waxwings** visited the 50K this winter, and were joined by increasing numbers of **Cedar Waxwings** as spring advanced.



Common Ravens deserve special mention, as this largest and most intelligent of our passerines continues to expand its range and demonstrate its adaptability and ingenuity in our increasingly urbanized world. Thanks to Langis Sirois who has been voluntarily surveying local raven nesting sites for over five years, more is being learned about the status of this species in the 50K. In the spring of 2008 Langis checked over 90 sites including about a dozen new ones he found this year, and 40 of these were successful. Many nests were constructed on both rural and urban structures, one of the more ritzy selections being the letters on the Hilton hotel at the Lac Leamy Casino. Evidently this posh location was also a safe and comfortable one for raising a family—this year the Casino pair fledged five young. The longest known nesting site for ravens in the 50K continues to be the Carlington quarry where a pair (presumably the same) has returned for at least 13 years and has frequently raised broods of five . . . this year they managed to fledge seven, the most ever recorded for a nest in Ottawa.

For many birders, the appearance of migrating **warblers** is the highlight of spring. This season did not disappoint, with all 25 of our expected species showing up on schedule in migrant traps such as the ever-popular Britannia Conservation Area. Later on, in late May and early June, 17 breeding warbler species were found in the Larose forest, one of our jewels in the crown for all kinds of interesting wildlife in the 50K. Another area that continues to be very productive for passerines, especially **sparrows**, are the fields south of the international airport where species such as **Clay-coloured, Field, Vesper and Grasshopper Sparrows** can be very vocal and visible, in spite of the sometimes heavy recreational vehicle traffic. **Lincoln's Sparrows** reclaimed their territory near the Mer Bleue boardwalk in June, as did the eastern or "yellow" race of **Palm Warbler**. The Fletcher Wildlife Garden hosted a rare western stray, an "**Oregon**" **Junco**, until at least 06 January. A species that moves through annually and always captures our attention is **Lapland Longspur**. A surprising location for one was the Ottawa Duck Club feeders on March Valley Rd. from 03-05 January, and a few were seen in more typical rural feeding habitats later in the month. In April, when the males begin to attain their handsome breeding colours, three were spotted along Rushmore Rd. near Richmond and a flock of at least 20 were seen on the 20th along French Hill Rd. near Navan. A rare in the east **Yellow-headed Blackbird** spent the winter at a feeder near Williamstown southeast of Ottawa and was present until at least 14 March. Good numbers of **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported in April and continued to move through during the first week of May.

Just as warblers are favourites in spring, **finches** keep us entertained in winter and it turned out to be a good year for them. Many feeders hosted **Common Redpolls** with a few **Hoary Redpolls** in the mix. A large and uncommon subspecies,

Carduelis flammea rostrata, a.k.a. the “**Greater**” **Redpoll**, was also noted on a few occasions. Several reports of **Red Crossbills** came from the Québec side and flocks of up to 60 were seen in May and June in the Larose forest. **Evening Grosbeaks** were noted regularly in Larose and other locations throughout the period, though **Pine Siskins** hardly showed up at all. As always, the erratic nature of the finches is one of the reasons we enjoy and appreciate them when they do decide to grace our local landscape.

All in all, despite the weather that we Canadians love to complain about, it was a great period for birds with many highlights. To everyone who shared sightings and information—thank you and good birding!

The information in this article was derived from reports to the OFNC Bird Status Line, personal observations and communications, as well as postings to the Ontario Field Ornithologists internet listserv ONTBIRDS. The Bird Status Line is updated regularly (613-860-9000) and transcripts of the Status Line reports, as well as a wealth of other information about birding in the Ottawa area, are available on the OFNC web site www.ofnc.ca. Another highly recommended resource is the Neilyworld web site by Larry Neily. For information about birds in the Gatineau and Outaouais area, contact the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais at 819-778-0737 or visit www.coo.ncf.ca.

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Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.

For further information,
call the Club number (613-722-3050).

Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.

ALL OUTINGS: *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

REGISTERED BUS TRIPS: *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (Payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait to the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. In order for the Club to offer a bus trip, we need just over 33 people to register. If fewer than 30 register, we have the option of cancelling the trip or increasing the cost. Such decisions must be done a week in advance so we encourage anyone who is interested in any bus trip to register as early as possible. We also wish to discourage postponing the actual payment of bus fees until the day of the event.*

EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE: *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation, and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities. Monthly meetings are held in The Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor. Attendees may have to pay \$5 parking per vehicle.*

BIRD STATUS LINE: *Phone 613-860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings use the 613-860-9000 number and stay on the line. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

**Saturday
4 October
9:00 a.m.**

MYXOMYCETES (SLIME MOULDS) IN EASTERN ONTARIO

Leader: George P. White

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of parking lot near Pizza Pizza. Trip coordinator is Fenja Brodo (613-723-2054). We plan to meet George (gwhite@lincsat.com) at the parking lot by the 5-span Pakenham bridge, by the waterfalls at about 10:00 a.m.

The Myxomycetes are a highly colourful diverse group of organisms that feature characteristics such as amoeba-like motility with fungal-spore production. They include some of the best documented and most ubiquitously distributed organisms in our world. Some occur in both tropical and temperate zones. About 200 or more species can be found locally and many can be recognized by sight. They inhabit leaf litter and rotting logs or live in the crevices of tree bark. We will be traveling to the Pakenham area to locate these and maybe some other fall micro and macro fungi. A hand lens is advantageous but not necessary. Photographers will want to bring their macro lenses. A brief course on recognition of the fruiting bodies and simple collecting techniques will be given before entering the woods. Wear hiking boots and bring a lunch.

**Tuesday
14 October
7:00 p.m.
Social &
Club
business**

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

CANOEING ONE OF CANADA'S HERITAGE RIVERS

Speaker: Brian Kinsley

Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, **Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.**

Canada's great northern rivers are classed as heritage treasures and yet they are still unfamiliar to many travelers; their beauty, grandeur and remoteness are often only enjoyed by a few determined, lucky people. One of Brian's hobbies is canoeing these rivers; and he has enjoyed organizing and guiding trips with small groups of friends. He will describe the fun and adventures of "doing" the Coppermine River. (Brian is also preparing a cook book of appropriate recipes for such ventures.)
Attendees may have to pay \$5 parking per vehicle.

**7:30 p.m.
Formal
Program**

Saturday
18 October
3:00 p.m.
to
Sunday
19 October
3:00 p.m.

OTTAWA-GATINEAU FALL BIRD COUNT

Participants for the Ontario side may contact Eve Ticknor at 613-737-7551, email *sandbird@magma.ca*. Those who wish to participate on the Quebec side may contact Garry McNulty for the northwest sector at phone 819-684-9861, email *gmcnulty@videotron.ca* and Daniel St-Hilaire for the northeast sector at 819-776-0860, email *savannarum@videotron.ca*. The post-count dinner and compilation (free pizza, coffee and soft drinks for all participants!) will be held at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre from approx. 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. This is the first of three traditional bird counts this season in the Ottawa-Gatineau area. (See the Christmas Counts on December 14 and January 3 below.) As always, you don't need to be an "expert" birder to join in; even counting birds at your feeder from the comfort of your own home, can be an important contribution. The more participants, the better to discover what's out there in our area during the fall and winter seasons!

Sunday
19 October
to
Wednesday
22 October

JOINT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETIES OF CANADA AND ONTARIO

Location: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Ottawa.

Scientific Program Chair: Jeff Skevington (contact Jeff at 613-759-1647 if you have any questions).

It has been a long time since Ottawa has hosted the meeting and this is a great opportunity for Club members who have an interest in insects. Plenary speakers for the meeting will talk about such varied things as building a DNA barcode database for Costa Rican butterflies and moths and their parasitoids, to spider sex, and wasp evolution. Seven symposia are planned and include sessions on invasive species, the role of Canadian Insect Collections and the Biological Survey of Canada. The Graduate Student Symposium is always a highlight, with the recent most cutting edge research presented by students from across the country. There is a fee for attending the meeting, but it should be well worth the money. The cost drops substantially if you are a member of either the Entomological Society of Canada or Ontario. See <http://www.canacoll.org/JAM2008/> for details on the meeting.

Saturday
25 October
7:30 a.m.
to
about
11:30 a.m.

**LATE FALL MIGRANTS & EARLY WINTERING
ARRIVALS**

Leader: John Cartwright

Meet: Mud Lake/Britannia Woods, at the Cassels Road parking lot (just before the entrance to Britannia Filtration Plant).

We will be searching for late fall migrants and possibly early wintering arrivals such as finches. Dress for the weather including appropriate footwear, and of course bring binoculars and a scope if you have one, also a drink and/or snack if desired. This event will be cancelled in the event of threatened continuous rain (not occasional showers).

Sunday
26 October
9:30 a.m.
to
mid to late
afternoon

AN EGANVILLE GEOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE

Leaders: Chris Hinsperger (1- 613-628-2283) and Geof Burbidge (819-827-0724)

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road by Pizza Pizza.

[Chris will meet participants at the Bonnechere Museum.]

We shall car pool to Eganville. You will begin your visit with a presentation of Ordovician fossils at the Bonnechere Museum in beautiful downtown Eganville followed by a walk around the village looking at examples of the fossils presented. Following this presentation participants will travel by car to the Bonnechere Caves site (approximately 9 km) for a tour underground and some fossil hunting along the shores of the Bonnechere River. Bonnechere Caves "Ontario's Natural Underground Wonder." Participants will have to pay the usual entrance fee to the caves (\$13 each; half of which will go to the Bonnechere Museum). Wear sturdy shoes, bring a lunch and a rock hammer if you've got one.

Saturday
8 November
8:30 a.m.

**ALFRED BOG, ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH
STATION, & OTHER SITES**

Leaders: Frank Pope and Phil Jeffreys, with Dr. Chris Kinsley
(Alfred Research Station)

Meet: at the COSTCO parking lot, corner of Innis and Cyrville
Roads.

Essentially, this is a tour of interesting sites in the United
Counties of Prescott and Russell. The focal points will be the
Alfred Bog boardwalk and the research station (sewage disposal
and organic agriculture) at the Alfred Campus of the University
of Guelph. On the way we will make brief stops at the Larose
Forest and the Lemieux land slide. The visit to the research
station will be followed by lunch at Le Chardo restaurant in
Alfred. Lunch will be followed by a tour of Beau's Micro-
Brewery in Vankleek Hill. There are two options for the return
trip. One would visit the karst conservation reserve at Atocas
Bay, then return on highway 174, pausing at Jessups Falls and
the MacSkimming Outdoor Centre. The second would take
highway 34 to highway 417, exit left at Casselman on County
Road 7 and proceed to the St. Albert Cheese Co-Op.

Transportation will be by car pool. You may leave your car at
COSTCO. Expect to be back at COSTCO by about 4:00 p.m.
Please register at the Club number 613-722-3050 by Thursday
November 5 if you plan on joining the trip. This allows us to
keep you informed of any changes, etc. However, we can
usually accommodate anyone who failed to register but shows
up ahead of scheduled departure.

Tuesday
11 November
7:00 p.m.
Social
& Club
business

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING BIRDS AND
BIRDWATCHING IN CUBA**

Speakers: Bruce Di Labio and Paul Jones

Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and
McLeod Streets, **Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.**

Cuba has over 365 recorded species of birds, including 39 that
are endemic or near endemic (occurring only in Cuba and its
immediate neighbours). Bruce and Paul worked closely with
local guides on a recent bird watching expedition to the
beautiful and historic island and were able to see all of the
available specialties. Highlights included the stunning Cuban
Trogon and Cuban Tody as well as the endangered Blue-headed
Quail-Dove and Bee Hummingbird (the world's smallest bird).
Please join us as Bruce and Paul recount their adventure and
discuss birds and birdwatching in Cuba, as well as the
conservation issues the island faces.

7:30 p.m.
Formal
Program

Saturday
29 November
10:00 a.m.
to
2:00 p.m.

WINTER TREE AND SHRUB IDENTIFICATION HIKE

Leader: Gord Vogg

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road by Pizza Pizza or at the Bill Mason Centre at 10:30 a.m. The Bill Mason Centre is on the right (north) just west of Dunrobin. Enter via the high school turn off and follow the gravel road along the east side to the trail entrance.

This will be a three to four hour outing at the Bill Mason Centre near Dunrobin. Bring a field lunch as we will be eating under one of the canopies mid-way around the trail. The Bill Mason Centre has a great trail network including boardwalks and forested trails. A small section of the trail enters alvar-like habitat and then descends close to Constance Creek. As a result, we will encounter an excellent variety of trees and shrubs, including some less well known species like Mountain Holly. Identification of plants in the winter can be difficult, so come on out and learn some of the tricks of the trade. We are having this hike in early winter so you can practice what you learn for the next few months. We are also certain to encounter some interesting birds and mammals at the Mason Centre. There are almost always porcupines in one of the outbuildings in the forest (great views for kids!), there should be winter finches around, and if we are lucky there may be shrikes and other birds around the wetland and feeders.

Saturday
6 December
8:30 a.m.
to
about
4:30 p.m.

EARLY WINTER BIRDING ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER WEST OF OTTAWA

Leader: Jeff Skevington

Meet: Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Road at Assaly Road, by Pizza Pizza. This is a full day outing to sites along the river between Ottawa Beach and Constance Bay. Bring a field lunch. Depending on the year, early December birding can be quite good along the river. If there is still open water we can expect to find a reasonable variety of waterbirds. Barring open water, this is promising to be an excellent year for winter finches, so we should be able to find some great winter birds from crossbills to three-toed woodpeckers. Come on out and start your winter bird list! It will give you an excuse to get out between now and the end of February!

Tuesday
9 December
7:00 p.m.
Social
& Club
business

7:30 p.m.
Formal
Program

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
STORIES FROM THE SUBCONTINENT -
A NATURALIST'S RAMBLES IN INDIA

Speaker: Justin Peter

Location: Canadian Museum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and
McLeod Streets, **Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.**

India presents the naturalist with some of the world's greatest contradictions. Much of the country's wildlife faces an uncertain future while the human population balloons. Yet many wild species thrive. Justin has visited India three times and will share some of his experiences and observations during this illustrated talk. Visit some of India's signature heritage sites, see the countryside and people, and of course, some of its amazing wild things and places!

Attendees may have to pay \$5 parking per vehicle.

Sunday
14 December

OTTAWA-GATINEAU CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

To participate on the Ontario side, please contact Eve Ticknor at 613-737-7551, email sandbird@magma.ca. For the Quebec side, please contact Daniel St-Hilaire at 819-776-0860, email savannarum@videotron.ca. The various sector leaders have not yet been selected, however the aforementioned contact people should be able to provide more information closer to the date of the event. Details about the post-count compilations and dinner will be provided by the sector leaders.

Saturday
3 January

DUNROBIN-BRECKENRIDGE CHRISTMAS BIRD
COUNT

To participate please contact Bruce Di Labio at 613-839-4395
email bruce.dilabio@sympatico.ca.

Sunday
11 January
1:30 p.m.
to
3:30 p.m.

WINTER PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHIOP

Leader: Colin Freebury

Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre, off Prince of Wales Drive, just south of the traffic circle.

This is an opportunity for OFNC members who are already familiar with how their camera works to learn more about shooting pictures outdoors in the winter. The workshop will include technical suggestions and an opportunity to share questions and information with other like-minded photographers. Weather permitting, there will be a practice session outdoors. Participants should bring one or two prints of winter scenes, either their own or from newspapers or magazines, which can serve as examples of potential problems or as models. Participation will be limited to the first twelve people who register with the Club number 613-722-3050.

Tuesday
13 January
7:00 p.m.
Review of
Minutes

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

130th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Location: Canadian Muscum of Nature (VMMB), Metcalfe and McLeod Streets, **Discovery Zone Theatre on the 4th Floor.**

The Council for 2009 will be elected at this meeting. There will be a brief review of the activities in 2008 and a statement of the Club's finances will be given. This is an opportunity to meet most of the Club's executive and the chairs of the various committees and to find out what makes your club tick.

Refreshments will be served.

Attendees may have to pay \$5 parking per vehicle.

7:30 p.m.
Meeting
called to
order

DEADLINE: *Material intended for the January - March issue must be in the editor's hands by November 1, 2008. Mail your manuscripts to:*

Karen McLachlan Hamilton,

2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON, K2J 4S7

II: (613) 838-4943; email: hamilton@storm.ca

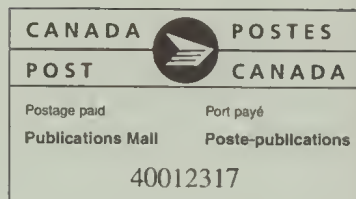
ANY ARTICLES FOR TRAIL & LANDSCAPE?

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations? Write up your thoughts and send them to Trail & Landscape. We accept email, diskettes and CDs, or submissions in traditional form-typed, written, or printed.

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